

formation of his decease did not reach the Council in sufficient time for such communication.

Captain JAMES HORSBURGH was born at Ely, in Fifeshire, on the 23d of September, 1762. His parents, though respectable, were poor: yet they contrived to give him all the benefit which a small school in the neighbourhood could instil; and he was afterwards apprenticed to a vessel in the coal trade. In this hard noviciate he had nearly served his stipulated time, when his ship was captured, and himself carried a prisoner to Dunkirk. After his liberation, young HORSBURGH made a voyage to the West Indies; and, on his return to London, he proceeded to Calcutta, but in a humble capacity. Here he joined the country trade as a free mariner; and, by his diligence and good conduct, became chief mate of the *Atlas*, in 1786. This vessel had the misfortune to be wrecked, in the same year, upon the isle of Diego Garcia, owing to the erroneousness of the charts then in use; and the disaster awakened the mind of HORSBURGH to the neglected state of Oriental hydrography. Thus stimulated, during the ten following years in which he served as first mate of several large ships which traded between Bombay, Bengal, and China, he neglected no opportunity of examining the various bays, coasts, and islands he touched at, to the extent of his means and ability. To qualify himself for this object, he had, by the assistance of books, previously exercised himself in the computation of lunar observations, and in the use of chronometers. He also taught himself drawing and spherics, from one of the most useful of nautical works, *Robertson's Elements of Navigation*.

The observations and corrections thus made enabled him to construct three charts of the China Sea and its channels, which being forwarded from the factory at Canton, by Mr. DRUMMOND, now Lord STRATHALLAN, they met with such approbation from Mr. DALRYMPLE, that the East India Company sent him their thanks, with a pecuniary present for the purchase of nautical instruments.

In 1796, Mr. HORSBURGH arrived in England, where he was so kindly noticed by Sir JOSEPH BANKS, Dr. MASKELYNE, Mr. CAVENDISH, and other gentlemen of eminence, that it encouraged him to renew his exertions with

vigour. Accordingly, in 1798, when he obtained the command of the *Anna*, a Bombay ship of which he had formerly been mate, he continued his observations upon a larger scale, during several voyages between Bengal, China, and England, till the year 1805, when he finally returned to this country; and, in 1810, was appointed hydrographer to the East India Company.

From the commencement of 1802 to the middle of 1804, Captain HORSBURGH kept a careful register of the indications of two marine barometers, taken every four hours, day and night, at sea and in port. His curious deductions from thence of the intertropical motions, were communicated in a paper published in the 95th Volume of the *Philosophical Transactions*; and he afterwards, to extend the utility of barometrical observations, published his *Atmospheric Register*, which affords a more simple view of the range of the mercury, than that of numerical tables.

Captain HORSBURGH returned from China in the *Cirencester*; and he had the good fortune to have the late Captain PETER HEYWOOD for his fellow-passenger. Following the advice of that experienced officer, and with his cordial assistance, HORSBURGH resolved to apply himself closely to his great work, the *East India Sailing Directory*, which, after five years' incessant labour, he produced. It is needless to add a remark on the value of this undertaking, as its utility is proved by the demand for four large editions, and by the praises of all its purchasers. Besides this noble contribution to the interests of navigation, Captain HORSBURGH published several other works upon nautical subjects, of which we may name his communication on the "Causes of the luminous appearance of the sea," and "Remarks on icebergs seen in low latitudes," both inserted in the *Philosophical Transactions*: and a new edition of Murdoch Mackenzie's *Maritime Surveying*.

Captain HORSBURGH was a man of mild unassuming manners and even temper; he enjoyed almost uninterrupted good health, which enabled him to apply to his useful pursuits till within a short time of his death, which happened on the 14th of last May, at his house at Herne Hill, in Surrey, in the 74th year of his age.

The Rev. WILLIAM FARISH, Jacksonian Professor of Natural and Experi-